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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL PGOV PO

SUBJECT: TFLE01: PORTUGAL REQUESTS EU AND UN RESPONSE TO MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

REF: LISBON 1449

**¶11. (U) Summary:** Until July 20, the Portuguese government had remained relatively quiet on its views of the Middle East conflict, other than lamenting the humanitarian crisis and following the EU's message (reftel). On July 20 and July 23, however, the GOP offered to participate in a future UN peacekeeping force in the Middle East and then urged EU President Finland to convene an extraordinary EU foreign ministers' meeting to discuss the crisis. Post obtained copies of both press releases on July 24. End summary.

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July 20 Press Release  
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**¶12. (U) Begin unofficial translation:**

-- The Government continues to monitor the developments in the Middle East with great concern, regretting the loss of lives in particular, the heightened humanitarian crisis, and the destruction of civil infrastructure. The Government reiterates the terms of the Conclusions adopted by the European Union Council last July 17, and expresses its total support for the diplomatic efforts undertaken by the Finnish EU President's and High Representative Javier Solana's envoy.

The complexity of the crisis demands the full attention of the international community and a united response from the European Union.

-- The Government further notes the actions of the UN Secretary General, concurring with his appeals for the

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immediate cessation of hostilities. Given this situation, the Government underscores its availability to consider terms of a Portuguese participation in an international peacekeeping force, under a UN mandate and with the strict respect for the constitutional norms, which puts an end to humanitarian crisis and creates conditions for assuring the stabilization of the situation.

-- We are also studying the possible channels for a national contribution to the diverse humanitarian assistance initiatives underway within the international community.

-- The Government has extended the necessary support to national citizens affected by this conflict, namely through securing means to guarantee their safe departure from the region. These (exit) means were also used by citizens from other nations, thereby contributing to the joint efforts underway.

Lisbon, July 20, 2006

End text.

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Letter from the Minister of Foreign Relations to his Finnish Counterpart  
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¶3. (U) Begin unofficial translation:

-- The Minister of State and Foreign Affairs, Luis Amado wrote to Erkki Tuomioja, his Finnish colleague, the nation which has the European Union Council Presidency, today, requesting that he call an extraordinary EU foreign ministers meeting as soon as possible to discuss the situation in the Middle East.

-- The fast moving political-diplomatic developments, the prolonged military confrontations, and the deterioration of the humanitarian situation justify, to the understanding of the Portuguese government, the convocation of a meeting at which such questions can be analyzed and future EU action addressing this conflict can be clearly defined.

-- This Portuguese Government proposal offers its willingness to see the EU actively involved in the solution to this conflict, speaking and acting with one voice and, in this way, moving towards the hopes of many Europeans who wish to see the Union as a balancing and stabilizing force in international relations.

Lisbon, July 23, 2006

End text.

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Comment  
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¶4. (SBU) In this, his first crisis as Foreign Minister, Luis Amado is clearly pressing to include Portugal in an international solution to the Middle East events. His forward-leaning communique, which volunteer Portugal in missions that have yet to be defined, are surprising given Portugal's limited resources and the active role it is already playing in East Timor, Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. Nevertheless, mainstream political parties agree with the GOP's initiative and have publicly backed the plan in the local media. End comment.

Hoffman